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EXTERNAL - POLITICAL

1. Congo. The Soviet press did its best to portray Khrushchev's Feb. 22 message to Nehru and other political leaders (published in Izvestiya Feb. 25) as enjoying world-wide support. Laudatory comment on the message from bloc and Western Communist sources was widely cited. However, the marked absence of support from neutral and uncommitted opinion, and in particular Nehru's failure to respond positively, obviously curtailed propaganda exploitation of the message which dropped sharply in the course of the week. There was also a gradual falling off in the highly emotional press exploitation of Lumumba's death, as well as in the volume of protest letters received by the Embassy from Soviet citizens.

US policy on Congo, and Assistant Secretary Williams' African trip, were the subject of sharp press comment. The Izvestiya (Feb. 28) review of the month stated that the "palm of leadership in hypocrisy" over Lumumba's death belonged to "American diplomats and figures"; that despite Williams' effort to paint US African policy in new colors, this policy is directed against the interests of independent African states and aims at a Congo solution advantageous to the colonizers; that, considering Congo as a test of intentions of governments, the US fails to condemn Belgium and supports Tshombe, Mobutu, and Kasavubu, even not refusing them arms, and thus interferes in Congo; and that those who really war against the UN are not the Soviets but those who, following events in Congo, intend to use the UN in new actions against the freedom and independence of peoples. Izvestiya (Mar 1) warned that Williams was taking dangerous steps in giving unilateral promises of support to reactionary groups, and charged that his activities furthered the "dishonest game" of secret and open supporters of the colonial regime.

The press carried conflicting reports of movements by Stanleyville and Leopoldville forces. The former were at first said to be receiving an enthusiastic reception in their advance toward Leopoldville, but subsequently reported to have gone back under threat of UN counter-action in the direction of Eastern province. The press also briefly mentioned the Czech Government's intention of renewing its diplomatic mission to the "legal government," a North Vietnamese offer to exchange ambassadors, and Gizenga's appointment of an ambassador to Poland.

2. Laos. Although the USSR sought to present a negative picture of the NNC proposal, it did not launch a major propaganda campaign to discredit it, and, in particular did not, seek to portray it publicly as an American ruse. In place of this the Soviet press reported that the NNC had been rejected by Burma because if would mean recognizing the Boum Oum Government and by Cambodia because the latter still believes a 14-nation conference to be the best means for settling the Laotian crisis. Statements by Souvanna Phouma and others stressing the importance of holding an international conference on Laos were picked up by the Soviet press.

The press indicated that heavy fighting is taking place in Laos as a result of the effort of Phoumi's forces to capture the Plaine des Jarres.

The impression left by the Soviet press reporting on this fighting was that Phoumi is getting nowhere and that, in fact, time is on the side of Kong Le and the Pathet Lao.

A related problem has been the Kuomintang irregulars in Burma. The press has reported conflict between these forces and the Burmese Army and has charged that many of the Kuomintang irregulars are now in Laos and that arrangements are being made for them to join up with Phoumi's forces. The Soviet press has claimed that these developments have caused a wave of anti-American feeling in Burma--as it is assumed there that the US has the power to control Chian Kai'shek's actions--and also indicated fairly clearly that the deployment of the Kuomintang irregulars is a matter of concern to Communist China.

3. Soviet Press Criticism of the US. In the first direct commentary on the new Administration's foreign policy since early February when several critical editorials appeared, the weekly journal Za Rubezhom (Feb. 25) published a long critical analysis by editor-in-chief D.F.KRAMINOV. Using a shortened text of an article in Look by William ATWOOD for context (which Za Rubezhom also carried), Kraminov reiterated the fairly sharp criticism of US policy on disarmament, defense increases, and Eastern Europe which was expressed in early Feb. (see Weeka No. 6). Kraminov went on, however, to denounce US-African policy as an effort to substitute US monopolists for European imperialists. He also characterized US German policy as "shrouded in fog" and ridiculed the panic alleged among West Berlin investors because President Kennedy had failed to mention Berlin in his first major addresses. Kraminov concluded with a reference to the slogan "walk softly but carry a big stick," insisting that "the urgent needs of peace demand not soft words but concrete deeds."

In addition to the attacks on Asst. Secretary Williams' African tour, and the reappearance of charges against US policy toward Cuba (see below), treatment of the President's press conference on March 1 was also somewhat critical. Pravda (March 2) published a brief report of the conference including complaint that the President's avowed intention to strengthen US armed forces "sharply contradict his remarks on the disarmament problem and assurances of efforts to improve Soviet-US relations."

4. Iran. The Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement published in the Feb. 28 press about the proposed Soviet visit by the Iranian Premier was clearly intended to convey the impression that Tehran, not the Soviets, had sought the visit in the first place. The Soviets were probably irritated that the Iranians made a unilateral announcement about the visit (Feb. 15) suggesting that it was a concession to Soviet wishes. The final paragraph of the statement, noting that the Soviets had agreed to postpone the visit on account of the Iranian elections, and that the date was subject to further clarification, seemed intended to show that the Soviets can bide their time. At the same time, Moscow seemed interested in having the Iranians proceed with the visit. The Foreign Ministry statement reiterated the Soviet desire for improved relations, and an Izvestiya (Feb. 25) article marking the 40th anniversary of the 1921 treaty was careful to avoid any direct criticism of the Shah or other government figures. At the same time, it warned "those who direct Iranian foreign policy" of the dangers involved in pulling other people's chestnuts out of the

fire and in the plans of American militarists to turn Iran into a military base.

5. Cuba. Charges that the US is planning aggression against Cuba reappeared in the Soviet press this week for the first time in any significant volume since Jan. 20. First, Cuban accusations that US fleet maneuvers in the Carribbean were reported briefly in most Soviet papers. This was followed on March 1 by a front-page Izvestiya article on reports from various Latin American papers charging that "reactionary circles in the US and their agents in several Latin American countries" are now planning new provocative action against Cuba. Subsequently, Pravda and Izvestiya (March 3 and 2 respectively) carried long accounts with quotes from the Cuban note to Latin American governments on US-Cuban relations including anti-American charges.

Prior to this new out-break, Soviet material on Cuba had been restricted largely to feature articles on internal Cuban developments, and has avoided from the time of the accession of the new US administration direct anti-American charges.

INTERNAL

6. Leadership. By traveling to Sverdlovsk this week to participate in a conference of leading agricultural workers and officials of the Urals area which started March 1, Khrushchev resumed his personal appearance tour which has figured so largely in the current drive for greater and more efficient agricultural production. The publication that same day of his February 23 apeech at the comparable conference for the central regions of the RSFSR served to underline the seriousness with which Khrushchev views the agricultural situation and his determination to root out and punish the "vile weeds" from party, government and agricultural management ranks who are responsible for deceptions and failures and to replace those whose only sin is inefficiency. His entourage in Sverdlovsk includes the Central Committee's RSFSR Bureau Deputy Chairman G.I.VORONOV and RSFSR Premier D.S.POLYANSKIY, listed in that order although the latter technically has greater party status as a full member of the CC Presidium. A.P.KIRILENKO, like Voronov a candidate member of the CC Presidium, spoke first at the conference as appropriate to his ranking local position as Sverdlovsk Oblast First Secretary.

Aside from Khrushchev's travels, the major leadership news of the week has been the granting of additional responsibilities to Presidium Member and Deputy Chairman (deputy premier) of the USSR Council of Ministers N.G.IGNATOV who is to head the new State Committee for Procurement, (an organ which will have broad monitoring and control functions for the production of key agricultural products as well as the basic task of improving efficiency in the state procurement of these products). The choice of Ignatov, while a measure both of the importance which Khrushchev attaches to the committee and of his confidence in Ignatov's abilities, also places the latter's future in jeopardy in the event that the experiment is not successful. Minister L.R. KORNIYETS, Chairman of the State Committee for Grain Products, is to be Ignatov's principal deputy as first deputy chairman of the new committee.

The reappearance of V.A.MUKHITDINOV who gave a dinner March 2 in honor of a North Korean party delegation shows that this CC Presidium Member and secretary is still acting in these capacities but does not answer the question as to what he may have been doing in the long interval since his last appearance January 5. Vacations are rarely that extended for the younger and healthier Presidium members. (Mukhitdinov is 43 and there have been no rumors of illness).

7. Ukrainian Premier Dismissed. The March 1 dismissal of Ukrainian Council of Ministers Chairman N.T.KAL'CHENKO as a direct result of 1960 agricultural failings in the Ukraine has been anticipated ever since Khrushchev's January 17 speech in which he linked Kal'chenko with former Party leader A.I. KIRICHENKO as persons demonstrating poor judgment or even stupidity in agricultural management matters. The removal of Ukrainian Minister of Agriculture M.S.SPIVAK, whose position also has become increasingly untenable since Khrushchev's attack, seems only a matter of time. Ukrainian First Secretary and CPSU CC Presidium Member N.V.PODGORNYY continues active and seems to have escaped serious censure. Like Ignatov, he will be under greatly increased pressure to "produce or else." Kal'chenko's replacement, V.V.SHCHERBITSKIY, is a former first secretary of the Dnepropetrovsk Oblast Party Committee who has been one of the subordinate secretaries of the Ukrainian Central Committee since December 1957. His appointment to a top "government" post is just one of many recent illustrations of the party-government dualism characteristic of all levels of the Soviet party-state apparatus. It may be worthy of note that Kal'chenko is another member of the CPSU Central Committee whose reelection to that body by the October 1961 Party Congress seems most unlikely.

8. Shake-up of Local Party and Government Personnel Continues. Undoubtedly related both to Khrushchev's call for what is essentially a purge of the misbehaving and the inefficient from responsible party, government and production positions and to a calculated reallocation of party personnel prior to the republic and all-union Party congresses next fall, extensive personnel shifts are taking place. Dismissals of collective and state farm chairman, rayon and city party-government officials seem most widespread but, increasingly, responding to Khrushchev's demand that the "protectors" and responsible superiors of misbehaving rank and file officials also be called to account, there have been changes at oblast, sovharkhoz and republic levels. Many such shifts have been noted in previous Weekas. Additional changes noted during the past week include:

(1) The promotion of Volyn' Oblast (Ukraine) Second Secretary F.I. KALITU to replace First Secretary I.S.GRUSHETSKIY who was "transferred to other work" by an Obkom Plenum February 24 (Pravda Ukrainy of Feb. 26).

(2) The removal of Chernigov Oblast (Ukraine) Executive Committee Chairman P.F.KUMAN'K for implication in the "illegal" construction of a stadium, a case considered by the Ukrainian Central Committee which strongly censored both Obkom First Secretary P. Ye. DOROSHENKO and Kiev Sovnarkhoz Deputy Chairman N.N.MIKHAYLOV, and which, in effect recommended that they be removed from their positions by the appropriate organs (Pravda Ukrainy of Feb. 28).

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(3) Kar'kov Oblast First Secretary V.N.TITOV was relieved "in connection with transfer to other work" by a March 2 Obkom plenum (attended by Ukrainian First Secretary Podgornyy) which elected N.A.SOBOL' to replace Titov (Pravda of March 3).

(4) Moscow City Second Secretary V.I.STEPAKOV has been promoted over the heads of other "deserving" party workers to be chief of the important CPSU CC Section of Propaganda and Agitation for the RSFSR, being replaced in the Moscow City Party secretariat by a virtual unknown N.G.YEGORYCHEV.

(5) Chelyabinsk Obkom First Secretary N.V.LAPTEV and Oblast Ispolkom Chairman G.A.BEZDOMOV are most likely candidates for early "disgrace dismissals" (if, in fact, Laptev has not been removed already) to judge from a March 2 Izvestiya article by Obkom Secretary B. RUSSAK on a local housing scandal which has already resulted in the firings of the Chelyabinsk City Party secretary and Ispolkom chairman (mayor) and in which the Obkom bureau is said to have been at fault in not taking timely action "against such an anti-state practice."

With regard to the foregoing, it should be noted that Titov and Laptev are both members of the CPSU Central Committee and that Doroshenko is a member of the Central Committee's Central Auditing Commission, a "coincidence" which suggests that these changes may be related as to much advance "preparations" for the October Congress' election of a new Central Committee as to local issues.

Laptev and others in similar positions may be able to avoid dismissal by resorting to the means whereby Kursk Oblast First Secretary L.G.MONASHEV seems to have avoided personal difficulties-- by shifting the blame--in Monashev's case to the local Sovnarkhoz and its chairman S.I.SHAPUROV.

9. Republic Party Congresses. A March 2 Plenum of the Azerbaydzhan CP Central Committee has scheduled a regular 25th congress of the Azerbaydzhan Party for September 6, 1961 (Pravda of March 3). This is the first announced scheduling of a republic party congress since the January 11 publication of the CPSU Central Committee decision to open the 22nd CPSU Congress October 17, following Oblast, Kray and union republic party conferences and congresses in September. These conferences and congresses are to "elect" delegates to the CPSU Congress and consider the projected new CPSU Party programme and statutes.

MILITARY

Negative

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